R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 015 737 JC 670 909

STUDENT AND FACULTY VIEWS CONCERNING THE SUMMER TRIAL PROGRAM AT GSC.

BY- FISHER, JAMES R. LIEBERMAN, LEWIS R.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.92 21P.

DESCRIPTORS- *JUNIOR COLLEGES, *SUMMER PROGRAMS, *REMEDIAL PROGRAMS, *EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAMS, STUDENT OPINION, *ADMISSION (SCHOOL), TEACHER ATTITUDES, QUESTIONNAIRES, AMERICUS, GEORGIA,

A REMEDIAL SUMMER TRIAL PROGRAM WAS GIVEN AT GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE (1965) TO HELP STUDENTS IN REMOVING CERTAIN DEFICIENCIES IN COLLEGE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS. OPINIONS ON THE PROGRAM WERE OBTAINED BY QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW TO DISCOVER (1) HOW THE PARTICIPANTS FELT ABOUT THE PROGRAM, (2) WHETHER THE NATURE OF THE PROGRAM WAS SUFFICIENTLY PUBLICIZED, (3) WHERE THE PROGRAM WAS DEFICIENT, AND (4) HOW IT COULD BE IMPROVED. BOTH STUDENTS AND FACULTY FELT THAT (1) THE PROGRAM WAS WORTHWHILE, (2) POOR BACKGROUND AND STUDY HABITS CAUSED THE GREATEST STUDENT DIFFICULTY, AND (3) ELIMINATION OF GRADES FOR THE COURSES (ALTHOUGH THEY WERE NON-CREDIT) WOULD REDUCE STUDENT PERFORMANCE. IT WAS OBSERVED THAT THE STUDENTS DID NOT LOOK ON THE PROGRAM AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ANYTHING OR TO FORM A BASIS FOR A CHOICE BETWEEN COLLEGE OR SOME OTHER ACTIVITY, AND ALSO THAT THEY HAD NO ALTERNATIVE PLAN IN CASE OF FAILURE TO MEET COLLEGE ENTRANCE STANDARDS. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE PROGRAM INCLUDED (1) AN EXTENSION FROM SIX TO NINE OR MORE WEEKS, (2) A REDUCTION IN DIFFICULTY IN THE MATHEMATICS COURSE, (3) ADDITION OF A COLLEGE ORIENTATION COURSE, (4) A STUDY OF SIMILAR REMEDIAL PROGRAMS AT OTHER COLLEGES, (5) THE USE OF VOLUNTEER FACULTY, (6) A TRIAL OF SMALL LABORATORY OR SEMINAR CLASSES, AND (7) EXTENSION OF LIBRARY HOURS FOR STUDY. (HH)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ERIC

ED015737

Student and Faculty Views concerning the Summer Trial Program at GSC

James R. Fisher and Lewis R. Lieberman
Charles L. Mix Memorial Fund, Inc.
O'Neil Hendricks
Georgia Southwestern College

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES
NOV 3 1967
CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

In this study, student and faculty views concerning the Summer Trial Program at Georgia Southwestern College were obtained by interviewing all those individuals involved in the program during the Summer of 1965. The Summer Trial Program is open to students who do not meet the ordinary entrance requirements. It is an effort to give these students the opportunity to get into college by taking courses (usually remedial) during the summer session.

This study is not an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the program towards its stated aim; nor is it meant as a substitute for such a formal study. Rather, we hoped to discover (1) how the participants viewed the program and how they felt about it, (2) whether information about the nature of the program was being successfully transmitted, and (3) what weaknesses and shortcomings the participants had noted and what suggestions for improvement they could make.

JC 670 909

Method

A questionnaire was devised to guide each interview. The three interviewers were instructed to obtain answers to the questions on the questionnaire but were free to expand the interviews as they saw fit. The questionnaire was originally devised for the students and a copy of it is included with this report as Appendix A. Appendix A also shows a copy of the interviewers Recording Sheet upon which all responses were recorded during the interviews. A modification of the questionnaire was used with the faculty and a copy of this modification is included as Appendix B.

Item (1) of the questionnaire was to determine whether the participants understood the conditions of the Summer Trial. Items No. (2), (3) and (8) concern the evaluation of the Summer Trial. Items (4), (5) and (6) concern how well the students were doing in their work. Item (7) concerns plans for the Fall. Item (9) asked the participant to react to a specific possible change in the Summer Trial Program. This change would have made admission contingent merely upon taking the recommended courses rather than on passing the courses. This change would have the effect of eliminating grading for these courses since these remedial courses carry no college credit.

None of the interviewers was a part of the Summer Trial Program nor had they ever participated in such a program at GSC. The five faculty members were interviewed by the same interviewer and this person was not well known to any of the faculty.

From a list of all students enrolled in the summer session, those students who were neither transfers nor transients were scheduled for appointments at half hour intervals during the last week of the summer school session. Only two or three failed to make the appointment and a total of 64 students was seen.

Faculty members were interviewed within a week after the Summer Trial had ended.

Results

For a detailed tabulation of the results of the interviews, see Appendix C (students) and Appendix D (faculty).

In brief, both groups seem to have understood the conditions of Summer Trial (Item 1), both groups thought that the program was worthwhile (Item 8), and both groups agreed that the program would not be as successful if some grading were not included as part of the situation (Item 9).

Faculty and students agreed in placing poor background and poor study habits as major causes of difficulty for the

students. Both agreed that poor teaching, lack of encouragement, and influence of other students were minor causes for difficulty.[1]

Many specific suggestions for improvement were made and may be found in Appendices C and D.

It is interesting to note that 43 students or about 67% estimated at the time of interview that they were passing (see Appendix C, Item 4). Since only about half of the Summer Trial students of 1964 actually passed this would seem to indicate that students were overestimating their performance. However, when at the end of the summer session a tabulation was made of the number of students who did pass Summer Trial, it was found that 42 individuals passed and 22 failed. It would appear then that the students were able to estimate their performance fairly accurately.

Discussion

The opinions which people express offer a fertile ground for speculation about their view of the world. In the present

---

[1] Item 6 of the questionnaire required the student to evaluate 7 possible causes for difficulty in his course work (see Appendix A, Interviewers Recording Sheet, Item No. 6). For faculty interviews the interviewees were asked to rank causes of difficulty in their Item 6 (see Appendix B, Item 6). As a result of a clerical oversight, the faculty questionnaire covered only 6 of the 7 items on the student questionnaire. Thus, there was no rating by the faculty on the extent to which courses were too difficult for the students.

study one might speculate at length about the views of the participants with respect to the student role, the teacher role, and the role of the college in our society. The present writers wish to limit themselves to a discussion of two main results.

The first result was the response to Item 7 (see Appendix C). It appears that students who at the time of the interview were failing did not have any plans made for the event that they would not go to college in the Fall. Even those who were passing had not made plans before taking on the Summer Trial Program. It is as if these students saw no alternative to college attendance.

Thus, although the students saw Summer Trial as an opportunity, it was an opportunity only to pass or to fail. It was not seen as an opportunity to learn anything about oneself. It was not seen as an experience which might lead one to make the best choice between college and some other activity. It was not seen as a choice because apparently no alternative was perceived.

It is possible that students did not confide in the interviewers concerning some alternative plans on the grounds that if the interviewers had any power over their grades, this posture of desperation might work in their favor. It seems to us, however, that this area needs further explora-

tion. If the students, Summer Trial or otherwise, see no alternative to college, then failure in college can only lead to frustration and discontent.

The second finding to be discussed is probably related to the first. In answer to Item 9 (see Appendix C) the participants in this study said that some form of grading was necessary to the Summer Trial Program. The idea then that a course of study might be beneficial in and of itself is foreign to their thinking. That the material in the course might be remedial and might make them successful in college is not a widely held notion.

The message which emerges from these two findings then seems to be that the student feels he has no choice about going to college, that he is being forced to go to college as he was compelled to go to grammar school. There is no idea of student initiative or student responsibility; the student must be made to do the work. There is no idea that the student and teacher are allied in some persuit together, and there is no expectation that the joint activity may be rewarding or enjoyable in itself.

Some Possible Recommendations

James R. Fisher

1. Lengthen the Summer Trial Program from the present six or seven weeks to nine weeks or even longer.

2. Create a study committee to review the Mathematics 99 course. Students did not feel that this course was remedial, felt it was too difficult and did not overcome their deficiencies. This course took the highest toll of students.

3. Introduce a College Orientation Course. This course could cover the meaning and purpose of higher education, study skills, the use of library facilities, etc. Essays and themes on these subjects might be integrated into the reading course.

4. Create a committee to study Summer Trial programs at other colleges.

5. Choose volunteer faculty members for the Summer Trial courses.

6. Experiment with small laboratory or seminar-type courses.

7. Keep the library open to 10:00 P.M. or possibly until midnight to provide air-conditioned quarters for study.

Summary

The students and faculty involved in the 1965 Summer Trial Program at GSC were interviewed for their opinions about the program. Results indicated that students and faculty understood the conditions of the program and that

almost all felt it was worthwhile. Both groups pinpointed poor background and poor study habits as causes of student difficulty. Both groups seemed to feel that the elimination of grading would reduce student performance. The students did not seem to have any plans to cope with the eventuality that they might fail the trial.

A discussion of the last two points, some recommendations, and detailed summaries of the results are also included in this report.

Appendix A

Revised

Outline for Summer Trial Interview. (July, 1965)

A. Introduce self to student and check to make sure that the individual <u>is</u> on Summer Trial.

B. Items (5), (6), & (9) lend themselves to quantitative treatment, so please try to get all the information.

Suggested Questions:

(1) What is your understanding of the conditions of Summer Trial? (If necessary, ask: What do you have to do in Summer School to be admitted as a regular student in the Fall?)

(2) Do you think Summer Trial is a good idea?

(3) In what ways do you think Summer Trial can be improved?

(4) How have you been doing in Summer School?

(5) What courses have you been taking? (List these)
What grade do you anticipate in each course? (List)
Have you been experiencing any difficulty with these courses?

(6) If failing or reporting difficulty, ask: To what do you attribute your difficulty?
WHETHER FAILING or NOT, check each of the items on the recording sheet either Yes, No, or Partly.

(7) What are your plans for Fall? (Ask all students)

(8) If student is going to College (GSC or other) ask:
Did Summer Trial help you in preparing for College this Fall? Even if student is failing and does not plan to go to College, ask: Do you believe Summer Trial was a worthwhile experience?

(9) Do you feel you were/or are under any pressure during Summer Trial? (Check one of three items on Recording Sheet). How would you have felt if you knew you would be admitted to College no matter how well you did in Summer Trial? (If necessary explain this question further.)

Appendix A Proj. #07501

Students Name _____ Sex _____

Date _____ Interviewer _____

Interviewer's Recording Sheet:

(1) Does student understand Summer Trial?
If not, state misunderstanding.

(2) Evaluation of Summer Trial.
List Comments:

(3) Ideas for Improvement.

(4) Self Evaluation of Progress.

(5) Courses and Grade Estimates.

(1)

(2)

(3)

(6) Failing_____ Difficulty_____
Spontaneous Comments on Difficulties.

Check list (Yes, No, or Partly)

_____ Study Habits

_____ Lack of Interest

_____ Poor Teaching

_____ Poor Background

_____ Course too difficult for student

_____ Lack of encouragement (home of school)

_____ Influence of other students

(7) Plans for Fall.

(8) Was Summer Trial Worthwhile? (Specify)

(9) Comments on Pressure during Summer Trial.

CHECK ONE:

_____Beneficial, helped get student to study?

_____Harmful, made student too nervous

_____No felt Effect

(10) Additional Spontaneous Comments;

Appendix B

Summer Trial Interview for Faculty Proj. #7501

(1) State your understanding of the conditions of Summer Trial.

(2) State the purpose of Summer Trial. Do you think Summer Trial is a good idea?

(3) In what ways do you think Summer Trial can be improved?

(4) How have your students been doing in Summer Trial? How do they compare with the regular students?

(5) What courses have you been teaching? What seems to give the students most difficulty?

(6) Which of the following do you think is the most important reason for the difficulty the Summer Trial students show? Which is second, third? (get a ranking)

_____(a) Study Habits

_____(b) Lack of Interest

_____(c) Poor teaching on part of Summer Trial teachers

_____(d) Poor background for courses

_____(e) Lack of encouragement (home or school)

_____(f) Influence of other students.

(7) Do you think most of the students on Summer Trial have definite plans for if they fail? Get Comments.

(8) Is the Summer Trial a worthwhile experience for the students? (specify)

(9) Do you think the Summer Trial students were under pressure? Do you think the students would do better (or worse) if the pressure were removed (i.e., they didn't have to get any particular grade to get in college in the Fall: they would just have to take the courses).

Check one: Pressure (is) (has)

_____ Beneficial, it gets the student to study

_____ Harmful, it makes the student too nervous to do his best

_____ No visible effect

Appendix C

Summary of Student Reactions to Summer Trial Evaluation Questionnaire

I. An overwhelming majority of the sample (62 to 2) satisfied the interrogators that they knew the requirements for being allowed to register for the Fall quarter. Two students were taking a course outside of the Summer Trial program and were unsure as to how a low grade in this might affect them.

II. A heavy majority of the students questioned felt that Summer Trial was a good program. Spontaneous comments of students could be summarized under the following broad categories:

"Gives the student an advantage over Fall registrants by giving him a head start". (16 students)

"Develops independence". (3 students)

"Offers an opportunity to get into college with a poor background". (20 students)

"Allows you to demonstrate yourself when HS grades and the CEEB may not be a fair measure of your ability". (6 students)

"Even if college entrance is not achieved, something important has been learned". (6 students)

Only two students felt that the program was not good. One of these made no comment but a second said the program had been misrepresented, he claimed he was told the math was remedial but found it to be a stiff course in algebra.

Five students, while favorable in their reaction to Summer Trial, wanted course credit if they succeeded in passing.

III. The following suggestions for improving the program were offered by the students:

1. Extend the length of the term (present academic period too short). (14 students)

2. Revise the math course (math course too difficult and not enough time to explain). (9 students)

3. Begin morning classes later. (5 students)

4. Warn students before enrollment of nature of courses and high standards expected. (5 students)

5. Faculty needs more appreciation of poor background of the students. (4 students)

6. Three male students felt there should be more restrictions on male students in the dormitories. This apparently referred particularly to quiet hours for study.

7. Two students felt there should have been more feedback on class progress...they claimed they did not have a clear picture of their academic status.

8. Two students wanted more emphasis on grammar in the English course.

9. One student wanted the program tailored to the specific goals she had. She complained that taking college algebra was not essential to her purpose of majoring in secretarial science.

10. Two students wanted more lenient standards for admission in the Fall, specifically, they wanted to allow a student to make at least one D and still not be "washed out".

11. And a single student requested organized sports and recreational activities.

12. One student thought the goals of the English course were too ambitious.

13. One thought the cafeteria food could be improved.

14. One wanted the registration procedure could be shortened.

15. Twenty-Six students had no suggestions to offer. (Note: the totals found in the first 14 suggestions will add up to more than the number of students interviewed because several students made more than one suggestion).

IV. Forty-Three students estimated that they were passing at the time they were interviewed.

Fourteen thought they were failing.

Seven students were uncertain as to their status.

V. The students were asked to estimate their grades as of the interview. The following results were obtained:

Math:	A-3	B-13	C-19	D-8	F-11	?-5
Eng.:	A-2	B-13	C-39	D-6	F-0	?-3
P.E.:	A-0	B-4	C-2	D-1	F-0	?-3

(note: Nine students stated they were passing P.E. but could not estimate their grade).

Other Courses:	A-0	B-2	C-3	D-0	F-0	?-0

VI. A. In general, the opinion of the students was rather evenly distributed concerning whether study habits were the cause of difficulty to them. No definite consensus could be seen. (20 "Yes"; 21 "No"; 17 "Partly")

B. By a fair majority, the students seemed to feel that lack of interest was not a factor in their studies. (12 "Yes"; 36 "No"; 9 "Partly")

C. The students strongly rejected the idea that poor teaching by the Summer Trial faculty contributed to their difficulties. (5 "Yes"; 50 "No"; 2 "Partly")

D. A large majority of the students felt that poor background was responsible for their academic problems. (40 "Yes"; 5 "No"; 12 "Partly")

E. The students also tended to deny that the courses may have been too difficult for them. ("Course too difficult?" - 14 "Yes"; 39 "No"; 4 "Partly")

F. They heavily rejected the idea that there had been either a lack of encouragement from home or the college. (2 "Yes"; 53 "No"; 1 "Partly")

G. Most students felt that their fellow students had not exerted any undue influence upon their studies. (9 "Yes"; 40 "No"; 8 "Partly")

VII. There was a strong tendency for these students to deny any plans save college attendance. A large proportion insisted they were coming to GSC next Fall, including some who were failing or were borderline. Another significant group insisted they would attend some college even if they flunked in the Summer Trial Program here. (Attend GSC, 50; Other college, 12)

VIII. An overwhelming majority felt that Summer Trial had been a worthwhile experience for them. Only two students were not sure of this. None were willing to say that flatly it had not benefited them.

IX. A heavy majority (57 to 7) felt that the terms and conditions of Summer Trial did indeed put them under pressure. The consensus (42 students) was that this pressure was beneficial. Fifteen students thought the pressure was harmful and Seven students thought the pressure was neither harmful or beneficial. Comments of the students on this matter frequently contained the idea: "I wouldn't have cracked a book if you had not put these terms on Summer Trial".

Appendix D

Summary of Faculty Reactions to Summer Trial Evaluation Questionnaire

I. All faculty clearly understood the specific grade requirements for the Summer Trial students. The faculty also added the following comments to this question which might be construed as goals for Summer Trial:

"To ferret out those students who can do college work..."
"To develop reading and study skills to help them do college work....stress reading comprehension rather than reading rate".

One professor pointed out that in the past a student could have one D and be allowed to register under certain circumstances.

II. All faculty felt that Summer Trial was a good idea. One professor said: "Many individuals would come to school in the Fall quarter who could not make it...Summer Trial saves them the shock". Another professor felt that ability to graduate from high school should be able to grant the student a chance at trying for college. Another professor pointed out that test scores and high school grades, are after all, a limited sample of behavior. Summer Trial can provide the college with a larger sample of behavior to assess the student's aptitude for college. Another opinion was that we have been able to select certain students who have gone on and "made it" and that even the failures have been known to achieve a certain kind of "success" if only in terms of character.

III. Faculty Suggestions for Improving Summer Trial:

1. Select faculty who are particularly interested in working with Summer Trial Program.

2. Strictly limit number of students permitted in each course or class.

3. Emphasis should be on lab type courses instead of lecture method. Would require the weaker students to attend proportionately more lab periods per day. The better students might be induced to help the weaker ones in these lab periods.

4. Emphasize the arts and skills of <u>listening</u> (attending).

5. Emphasize concept formation, rather than traditional review of the subject which assumes more background than the students actually have.

6. Stress, possibly through the English course, or introduce as a completely new addition to the curriculum, a course on orientation to college, including methods of study and use of library resources.

7. Lengthen the term of the session.

8. Study other Summer Trial type programs at other colleges.

9. Select a new text in Math that approaches basic concepts rather than dropping the student into college algebra. (probably due to very weak math instruction in the smaller high schools, these students appear to lack most fundamental concepts needed to think algebra).

10. Use the Summer Trial as a screening or testing ground for those who announce their intention to major in engineering.

11. Get the Summer Trial faculty to plan their courses collectively. A unified set of goals is needed that all faculty can agree upon.

12. Teach the <u>structure</u> of mathematics as first objective in the math course.

IV. On comparing Summer Trial students with regular students, the faculty said:

"They (Summer Trial students) seem to lack understanding that they have to study".

"This year they were on the average with the regular students".

"Toward the end of the session, their efforts were equal to the regular students. During the first

half of the session the students did not listen well. This improved later".

"This year's Summer Trial students were more highly selected and approached the regular session norm".

"They are weaker in most respects".

V. The following are observations on what caused the most difficulty to the students:

"In English, vocabulary; In Math, reasoning".

"They didn't know how to attack a problem, they were unable to see an author's outline" (English professor).

"The structure of a sentence" (English professor).

"Radicals, fractions and exponents" (Math professor).

"Fractions" (Math professor).

VI. Causes of difficulty:

	Prof.: A	B	C	D	E	Avg. of Ranks
Study Habits	2	2	2	1	2	1.8
Lack of Interest.....	3	4	3	3	4	3.4
*Poor Teaching on the part of Summer Trial Faculty.....	6	6	5	6	1	4.8
Poor background for courses.	1	1	1	2	5	2.0
Lack of Encouragement (from home or college).....	5	3	6	4	3	4.2
Influence of Other Students.	4	5	4	5	6	4.8

*(One professor, in making this ranking, wrote "I don't agree with this question". Further discussion gave the impression the professor felt this was not a fair or appropriate question to ask on this evaluation.)

VII. Students plans for the Fall:

"Seem indefinite, if they are failing".

"Students seem vague...The 'Army' or a 'job'".

"The failing student seemed discouraged and worried. I wonder how many really had a desire to achieve a college education".

"Apathy".

"They do not have an idea of failing so they do not plan for it".

VIII. Is Summer Trial Worthwhile?

"Yes, it could be if the program is planned to meet both academic and social needs...this is a special group...they should have a total experience".

"Yes, it offers opportunities for people who might not otherwise benefit".

"Yes, the student learns the value of an education and to develop independence".

"In part....it is more worthwhile than nothing, but it is still lacking as a total experience".

"Yes, it makes them feel like they can't get through school with just any kind of grades".

IX. Were the students under pressure? Would they have done better without any pressure (if there was any)?

"Some were and some were not. It depended upon the individual whether he was under any pressure and also whether it was harmful or beneficial".

"Yes, they were under pressure. Whether it was harmful or beneficial depended on the individual case".

"Yes, they were under pressure and it was beneficial".

"Yes, they were under pressure. It was both harmful and beneficial".

"No, they were not under pressure".